

15. OALC Resilience Day Report

I attended three sessions plus OALC's AGM on Friday, July 18th, 2025.

Parish Online

Following on from the Parish Council's discussion re: to migrating to gov.uk for our emails, I was interested to hear more about Parish Online. It was started in 2008 to address the technological divide between local councils and their higher tier counterparts. They create software that meets local council needs. The work is constantly evolving and our small group put it to the test by choosing a parish and using the available tools to understand and analyse a range of aspects of the village. We defined boundaries both of the village and of properties. We were able to have quick access to Land Registry ownership, high resolution aerial photography and Ordnance Survey maps. We could add the distribution of benches, bus stops, export a list of addresses in the parish, do mail merge for mailing and a host of other things. It would be helpful for orienting new councillors to the parish.

It made me think how useful this would have been as we were writing the Neighbourhood Plan – so many resources in one place. With so many changes in the future, boundary changes, hierarchy changes and information, it seems that a wide range of resources in one place would be very timesaving. I understand it helps with responding to planning applications as a single plot can be interrogated fairly quickly.

This would be the group that would put the gov.uk councillor email addresses in place. I also asked the developer to look at our website and he was impressed with the amount of information on it and said he could assist in further development.

My overall impression is that we should set-up a meeting with the developer and learn more about the cost how the product can support the work of the parish council.

Greater Oxford Unitary Council

I met with one of the officers of Oxford City Council and asked about the reasons for:

- expanding the city boundary
- if he had met with any parish councils to discuss their views
- what were their policies on protection of the countryside going to look like

On the first point it was clear that an expanded boundary was so the city would have the use of land that would support Oxford's vision for the future – to be part of an English Silicon Valley. Housing would be needed to support the employment sites they hope to develop, and the density of housing would need to increase.

On the second point, no consultation has taken place with parish councils. I took the occasion to be clear about our parish's vision for the future and the role of our Neighbourhood Plan. He was aware of NPs but said that the central government might well have a different plan for the area.

Onto point three and not much luck there. He was aware of the various charities in place and the protections from Natural and Historic England. Again, central government could create policies that would mitigate some of these protections. There wasn't a clear message of the importance of the countryside to matters other than housing.

Joint Resilience Team – Community Emergency Plans

We have an Emergency Plan and I am the point person for it. The last training session I had was at the W.I. a number of years ago. I was definitely time for a refresh.

I came away with some action points:

- check with the Village Hall Committee that we can name the hall as a gathering or refuge point
- do the same for the church
- the Priority Service register is electronically available, check that it is on the parish website
- map regular flood sites and have flood signs available (we do that)
- get a first aid qualified list from villagers
- get an up-to-date list of keyholders
- find out what an Activation Trigger is
- identify works that need to be done to prevent flooding and see what grant funding is available
- update our list of vulnerable people – best done annually

This was a very practical and useful session.

Diane Bohm